



# *Town of Coventry*

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1712 Main Street • Coventry, CT 06238 • Fax (860) 742-8911

**RE: AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT MATCHING FUNDS AND EXTENDING THE TIME PERIOD FOR  
DISTRIBUTING GRANTS FOR CERTAIN LAW ENFORCEMENT EQUIPMENT**

Submitted by: Lisa Thomas, Chairwoman, Coventry Town Council  
March 29, 2022

Chairmen Fonfara and Scanlon, Ranking Members Henri and Cheeseman, and members of the Finance, Bonding and Revenue Committee:

My name is Lisa Thomas. I am Chairwoman of the Coventry Town Council, a small town in rural eastern Connecticut. I respectfully ask that you amend SB12 to increase the bond authorization under CGS 4-66g for the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) and address concerns over the arbitrary capping of STEAP grants last fiscal year that effectively undermined the program's purpose.

Our rural communities do not have a significant commercial tax base so the overwhelming burden for funding services and schools falls upon local taxpayers. In a time of urgent competing demands on our towns, from wastewater treatment to providing basic ambulance service, we find ourselves in danger of not being able to meet our obligations to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our residents. For many years the Small Town Economic Assistance Program grants were a lifeline for our small communities.

Coventry has benefitted from STEAP grants for reasons ranging from safety to economic development to recreation needs. Those grants allowed us to, among other things:

- repair the Coventry Lake gate that is used to raise and lower lake water levels. This is critical to landowners on the lake, to management of invasive aquatics, and to recreational boating on the lake - including via the State of Connecticut owned boat launch.
- complete work in our downtown village (Coventry Village Economic Development) in order to provide infrastructure for economic growth compatible with our Plan of Conservation and Development
- cap our landfill and build a football field and sports complex on it.

The total grant funds Coventry has received through STEAP exceeds 1.5 million dollars. There are additional projects we have had to keep on hold during the period when STEAP grants were frozen and even now with dramatically reduced grant awards that require local dollar matches. Our small towns simply do not have the local revenue sources. Funding has become even more challenging as dollars are increasingly directed towards our urban and suburban neighbors rather than to our rural towns.

Thank you for your time. Our small towns appreciate you giving this request your consideration.

Respectfully,

*Lisa Thomas*

Lisa Thomas  
Chairwoman, Coventry Town Council